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Facial Lining: Poems

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Porcelain Alibi

Three fingers of whiskey
circumnavigate the glass.
Glancing back,
while standing at full mast,
“I am the father,” he bellows,
then swims
through origami trash.

Calloused hands bleed,
staining the wood of
which we were carved.
Mountains of pine scented sawdust
cascade into fires
shaping those glass animals
strategically placed on a shelf.

Buckets of water
are carried up the hills,
her hand remains under skirt,
as the forest burns.
Sweat trickles down her face
across “that girlish smile.”

Portrait of A—

Recoiling into a dream of her dream
I am suspended
in the prism of her preying eyes and sultry smiles,
captive to her venereal hues
kaleidoscoping through stained glass
onto weathered stone streets.

I step away,
she shadows me mockingly.
I stride to lose sight of her
within the cracks, turning
into the alley
toward the door.

My atelier—oils, palettes, easels, charcoal—
she looms
and my tantalized eyes
vacillate between portrait and blank canvas,
blank canvas and portrait.
Dawn illuminates
the pigmented dust
as I lay down the brush and
stow the paint.

Blocking, the Scene

You covertly removed the scripts,
stripping silk strings invisible
though they seemed.
You subtly took up the quill
dipped in ink
distilled
from idol's ashes.
Know: you were seen
gathering clippings behind your
tinted screen.

Paper lanterns bounce
off the ceiling.
I catch your glance,
as your face forms
a chiseled grimace.

Now you are speaking
encapsulating voices
of textbook champions.
You of all I think
would have retired such
plastic castles
on the edge of a sandbox.

Smoke signals
of your lamenting lingers
about the screen,
such ashen snow
dancing upon faces
of the crowd.
Then you step outside
A way into the scene,
now smiling.

Published History

Remember, when hands grasped out
for the clanging of metal bells
reverberating through gallows?
Can you trust the moments
when smiles
weren't distant mirages?
Did you trust the moment objects collided?
Could all be proved
as smoke with no mirrors?

Remember, the times before you
convinced the author to write your death,
those cold nights when
many rooms were left unattended.
Before tunneled eyes caught
my reflection and the
mind whispered he is the oppressor.

Yes, the moments you tended the fire.
No?
I do and will remember the
moments spent reading aloud
the narrative of your character.
The moments I cursed
myself as the creator.

Do you remember those moments
when you had
a voice?

One Last Masquerade

I cast and mold masks to hang upon a wall,
attaching porcelain faces to aimless feet.
Four seasons found in crafted eyes.
Frailty cloaked within the clay,
shelf-life sustained.

Through combating time masks crack or break.
I continue to create as moments escape,
while the world grows tasteless, old.

The masked faceless reflection of the son,
nameless, nothing to anyone.
Disclosed, I moved effortlessly
down crowded streets:
broken mirrors swept away.

I unmask, by pouring slip
into predetermined faces.
Those furnaces burn out the night.
With a smile I paint the last one
before confronting nature's light.
Each mask I make
Becomes one less
that touches
my skin.